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an Arabic influence on the hypothetical Byzantine romance commonly regarded as the story's source; but this influence is still no more than a surmise.

One other possibility remains, which the scholarly passion for source identification is extremely reluctant to consider. Might not the first version of the story, antedating by some decades the sole manuscript we possess, have been an original composition? Episodes and features of *Floire et Blancheflor*, a point or two from the *Jourdain de Blaivies* story, certain incidents from the *Apollonius* romance, perhaps a suggestion from the earliest *Bueve de Haumtone* and a reminiscence of one or other of the Chrétien stories,—these with who knows what besides from other essential items in the jongleur's répertoire, adding something from such popular tales as were known to him, would be amply sufficient to build up the whole story, even without the use of the wonderfully vivid imagination the author evidently possessed. Such a theory is certainly as plausible as the Arabic idea; the lack of the usual reference to an earlier author strengthens it; and until some definite work comes to light more obviously connected with the story than anything that has as yet been brought forward, it seems to provide at least a satisfactory—and attractive—working hypothesis.

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Les Femmes Savantes, by Molière, edited with Introduction and Notes by C. H. C. Wright, Professor of the French Language and Literature at Harvard University. New York, Oxford University Press, 1920. xiii + 144 pp.

In this new edition of *Les Femmes savantes*, we find an excellent presentation of the text of the play, together with a brief introduction and notes. The text followed is the standard one of the *Grands Ecrivains français*, edited by Despois and Mesnard. To the text have been added the directions for the production of the play followed by the *Comédie française*. These directions are taken from the *Edition de la Comédie française* by Georges Baillet, who played the rôle of Clitandre for some thirty odd years. It is the presentation of these directions to the American student which constitutes the sole novelty of Professor Wright's edition.

The introduction is well written and pleasant to read, but far too short to give more than a passing glimpse of the comedy's value as a literary production or of its place in Molière's work. The notes are adequate in so far as they elucidate linguistic obscurities and their explanations of literary references are correct; it could hardly be otherwise in the case of a text subjected to so much previous commentation. We might wish a somewhat fuller citation of parallel and explanatory passages from other writers in an edition which must often be used by students not in reach of a library of French literature. There is no vocabulary.

Taken altogether, Professor Wright's edition of the *Femmes savantes* is carefully prepared and offers sufficient material for a clear understanding of the play by a student whose work on Molière is supplemented by abundant outside reading or by a good course of lectures by a competent teacher. To the writer, however, it seems unfortunate that a new edition of Molière's greatest comedy of manners, and especially one by so competent an authority as Professor Wright, should not have an exhaustive introduction which would interpret to the student in the twentieth century the interesting life of the French salon in the seventeenth. I am aware, from personal experience, that the American publisher bitterly begrudges the space so required, yet if this new edition is to do more than fill the gap in the Oxford Series of French texts, only such an introduction would justify its publication.

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THE DISJUNCTIVE POSSESSIVE

The logical possessive of the personal pronoun which, postponed to a place of emphasis, becomes a sort of disjunctive possessive, or emphatic material genitive, has since Jack London's book, *White Fang*, been made a literary fad by his multitudinous imitators. This "the-clay-of-him" genitive¹ is differentiated from the ordinary

¹ *White Fang* contains some twenty examples of this construction, three of which are as follows: "The clay of him was so moulded." "The clay of him had been so moulded in the making." "They were his environment, these men, and they were moulding the clay of him into a more ferocious thing than had been intended by nature." Cf. the normal possessive variant: "It was another evidence of the plasticity of his clay."